

**SOUDERTON
BOROUGH
POLICE
DEPARTMENT**



**2023
ANNUAL REPORT**

OVERVIEW

As of January 2023, the Souderton Borough Police Department (SPD) consisted of eight full-time staff and one part-time officer. Full-time staffing included the Chief, a Detective, and six patrol officers. The department also included a full-time Administrative Assistant.

Personnel:

Chief Brian Newhall – Chief Newhall has been with the department for three years. He retired after 20 years with the Upper Moreland Police Department where he was a Patrol Sergeant, Instructor, and a member of the SWAT Team. Chief Newhall then served as Chief of the Valley Township Police Department in Chester County for 2 years. He has a master's degree and is currently completing his Doctorate in Business Administration. Chief Newhall is a certified Emergency Medical Technician, a PEMA and FEMA certified Emergency Management Coordinator, a certified firefighter, and is a police academy instructor.

Detective Joseph Rudner – Det. Rudner has been with the department for 19 years. He began his career here as a patrol officer and became our detective in 2013. He is responsible for all juvenile and complex criminal investigations and has served on multiple occasions as the Officer-In-Charge in the absence of the Chief. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army.

Officer Thomas Lawson – PO Lawson has been with the department for 31 years. He holds a master's degree from Saint Joseph's University, and a certificate from Northwestern University. He is a field training officer and has served on multiple occasions as the Officer-In-Charge in the absence of the Chief. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

Officer Jeffrey Lukens – PO Lukens has been with the department for 12 years. He is responsible for fleet maintenance and the schedule. He is a field training officer, a certified bicycle officer, and a certified firearms instructor. He has served as the Officer-In-Charge in the absence of the Chief.

Officer Gregory Meinhardt – PO Meinhardt has been with the department for 8 years. He assists Det. Rudner with crime reporting and assists the Chief with some of the equipment the department uses. He is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Officer Megan Jarrell – PO Jarrell has been with the department for 4 years and came here after working as an officer at the University of Pennsylvania. PO Jarrell is completing her master's degree. She assists Det. Rudner with juvenile matters and crime reporting. She is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

Officer James Throop – PO Throop has been with the department for 21 years. He spent his first 19 years as a part-time officer and was hired full-time in 2022. He is a certified Paramedic.

Officer Jason Saucier – PO Saucier has been in law enforcement for 15 years, working at both the federal and municipal levels. He was hired as a full-time officer in 2022. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army.

Administrative Assistant Dianna Fields – Mrs. Fields has been with the department for 13 years. She is responsible for maintaining our records, working with the courts to schedule hearings and move paperwork, and assists with the scheduling. She also handles our IT and phone issues. She makes sure the department keeps running.

Part-time Officer Martin DiVergigelis – PO DiVergigelis retired from the department after 15 years of service.

Part-time Officer Coleen Breslin – PO Breslin has been with the department for one year. She is a graduate of the Delaware County Police Academy. She previously worked with the Darby Borough Police Department.

With the approval of Borough Council, we started the hiring process for the two new full-time police officer positions that have been created.

Schedule:

The patrol officers work 80 hours a pay period. In a two-week cycle, they work six, 12-hour shifts and one 8-hour shift. Det. Rudner works eight 10-hour days. Chief Newhall works 90 hours in a pay period, and Administrative Assistant Fields works 80 hours a pay period. The patrol shifts are as follows:

Monday to Saturday:	Sunday:
6:00 AM to 6:00 PM.	6:00 AM to 2:00 PM.
2:00 PM to 2:00 AM.	2:00 PM to 10:00 PM.
6:00 PM to 6:00 AM.	10:00 PM to 6:00 AM.

When fully staffed (no one taking time off), we have two patrol officers covering the borough for 12 hours a day. Extra coverage is provided by Chief Newhall and Det. Rudner as part of their normal schedule.

A representation of the patrol officer work rotation by days and hours is as follows:

Week 1: Monday = 12, Tuesday = 12, Friday = 12, Saturday = 12, Sunday = 8

Week 2: Wednesday = 12, Thursday = 12

Vehicles:

Our fleet of police vehicles includes:

1. 6501 – 2003 Chevrolet Trailblazer, 4-wheel drive unmarked SUV used by Det. Rudner and for unmarked patrol duties.
2. 6502 – 2021 Ford Explorer Police Interceptor, 4-wheel drive patrol vehicle.
3. 6503 – 2020 Ford Explorer, 4-wheel drive patrol vehicle.
4. 6504 – 2017 Chevrolet Equinox 2-wheel drive used by the Chief and for patrol activities.
5. 6505 – 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe, unmarked 2-wheel drive patrol vehicle.
6. 6506 – 2017 Ford Taurus Police sedan, unmarked all-wheel drive patrol vehicle.
7. 6507 – 2022 ZERO DSRP Electric motorcycle.
8. 6508 – 2000 Ford Crown Victoria. This unit serves as our community policing vehicle and is equipped with a sound system and lights for community events.

Current mileages on these vehicles (as of January of 2024):

1. 6501 – 140,486
2. 6502 – 22,095
3. 6503 – 26,904

4. 6504 – 50,319
5. 6505 – 104,771
6. 6506 – 60,520
7. 6507 - 798
8. 6508 – 140,162



Note – Although mileage takes its toll on vehicles, engine hours are what really affect our fleet. For example, vehicle 6505 has 16,670 engine hours, which according to General Motors equates to 500,100 miles, for a total of 604,871 theoretical miles. We do our best to maintain our fleet.

2023 Officer Activity:

<u>OFFICER</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>CALLS HANDLED</u>	<u>ASSISTS</u>
Throop, J	FT	1,607	104
Lukens, J	FT	1,436	87
Lawson, T	FT	1,197	145
Meinhardt, G	FT	1,042	97
Jarrell, M	FT	934	84
Saucier, J	FT	863	89
Breslin, C	PT	805	280
Newhall, B	FT	538	83
Rudner, J	DET	146	33
Other Departments	N/A	40	(Calls handled when we had no one available)
Fields, D	ADM	39	1
DiVergigelis, M	PT	1	0

FT = Full time employee

PT = Part time employee

DET = Detective

ADM = Administrative Assistant

Hours Worked in 2023:

Throop, J	2,117	Lawson, T	1,671
Newhall, B	2,075	Saucier, J	1,605
Fields, D	1,974	Breslin, C	1,389
Lukens, J	1,927	DiVergigelis, M	8
Meinhardt, G	1,912		
Jarrell, M	1,817		
Rudner, J	1,715		

Shifts worked in 2023:

Newhall, B	262	Lawson, T	160
Fields, D	222	Saucier, J	156
Throop, J	203	Breslin, C	139
Lukens, J	189	DiVergigelis, M	1
Rudner, J	186		
Meinhardt, G	184		
Jarrell, M	170		

Calls and arrests

When the SPD responds to or generates a call, it is put into our record management system which is managed and operated by Montgomery County. This is from where we draw the numbers and statistics which are included in our monthly reports, and this report. There are occasional errors and minor discrepancies due to computer glitches, outages, and data entry errors. Below are comparisons between 2021, 2022, and 2023:

Call volume:

2021: 5,535

2022: 7,053

2023: 8,648 23% Increase from 2022



Average calls per day:

2021: 15

2022: 19

2023: 24 27% Increase from 2022



Vehicle Crashes:

2021: 109

2022: 123

2023: 140 14% Increase from 2022



Arrests:

2021: 71

2022: 81

2023: 77 5% Decrease from 2022



Part 1 Crimes (serious crimes such as robberies, rape, and aggravated assaults):

2021: 54

2022: 71

2023: 54 24% Decrease from 2022



Part 2 Crimes (minor crimes such as public drunkenness and vandalism):

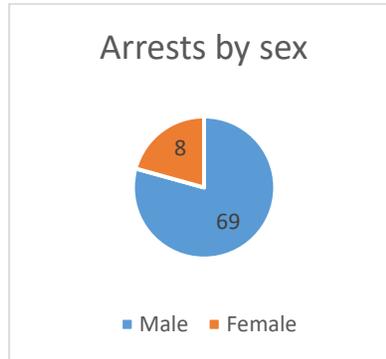
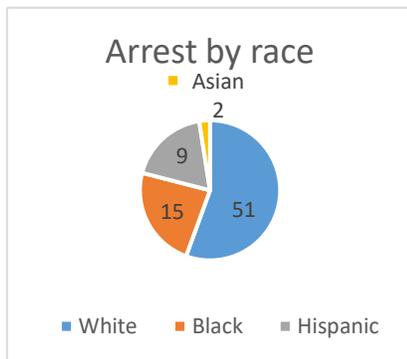
2021: 169

2022: 151

2023: 170 13% Increase from 2022



Arrests by population (actual numbers shown):



White: 66%

Black: 19%

Hispanic: 11%

Asian: 4%

Male: 89%

Female: 11%

*It should be noted that these numbers also represent people who have been arrested multiple times. For example, although there are 15 black arrests, three people accounted for six of those arrests.

Events and community outreach:

We participated in 36 public events including 3rd Fridays, Concert Sundaes, school and church visits, community meetings, the holiday parade, other parades, multiple 5K races, Shop with a Cop, Coffee with a Cop, our first ever Citizen's Police Academy, assisted our food banks, and two drug take back events, to name a few. Our officers again participated in a "No-Shave November" charity event and were able to raise and donate \$1,250.00 to a shelter for women.



Pictured above are our officers attending an event at Jesse's BBQ, PO Breslin at a Third Friday, Chief Newhall at a Variety Club event, Officer Lukens with our Citizen's Police Academy participants, Officer Lukens, Chief Newhall, and Officer Throop at Shop with a Cop, and our officers assisting at the Philabundance food distribution point.

2023 CHANGES

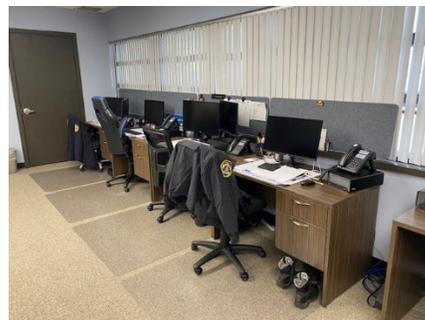
Vehicles:

In an effort to expand our community policing efforts, we purchased a 2000 Ford Crown Victoria from the Upper Gwynedd Township Police Department. The car had been used as their DARE vehicle before it was replaced. The car has a full sound system which takes up the trunk and backseat. We had the car specifically lettered so that no single municipality name appears on it so that any department that requests to use it can. This car not only built bridges with the community; it also has strengthened our relationships with our surrounding departments. It appeared at many events in and out of Souderton.



Equipment:

We took delivery of more equipment in 2023. These items include in-car video systems in three cars, a tint meter for checking the darkness of window tint on vehicles, a new preliminary breath test (PBT) to assist us in drunk driving detection and prosecution, and upgrades to our patrol office where the officers write their reports and conduct training.



Some of the equipment we carry in our vehicles was also updated and standardized. It includes:

Safety signage to close roadways.

Equipment to help people who lock their keys in their cars.

Naloxone for drug overdoses.

Calibrated stop watches for timing traffic and speed enforcement.

Various other equipment for use on vehicle crashes and crime scene investigations.

Training:

Annual mandatory training was conducted for our officers. In addition, all the officers went to additional training/certification classes.

We subscribe to Lexipol, the nation's largest policy, procedure, and accreditation assistance firm. Over the last two years, they have been providing us with nationally and locally accepted policies which can be tailored to any specific circumstances that we have (if needed). These policies are constantly updated to reflect current statutory and case law, and best practices. When we are finished, we will have about 170 policies that meet or exceed the standards for accreditation in Pennsylvania.

We subscribe to monthly, on-line trainings which cover case law and changes in criminal procedures in Pennsylvania and the third circuit of the United States. These are presented by Attorney Christopher Boyle.

2023 Training Calendar

NAME	MIST 201	MIST 301	MIST 401	MIST 501	USE OF FORCE	FIREARMS (annual)	TASER (Annual)	EXTRA TRAINING	EXTRA TRAINING
Newhall	3/15	3/17	3/20	3/21	8/11	10/10	6/28	EVIR 9/13	RMS MGT 12/8
Rudner	3/30	3/30	6/19	6/20	8/11	10/10	6/28	JTAC 4/25	RMS MGT 12/8
Lawson	3/4	3/5	3/9	3/10	10/17	12/1	6/28	De-escal 9/19	N/A
Lukens	6/12	6/13	6/17	6/17	8/11	10/10	6/30	IPMBA Ebike 4/15	EVIR 9/13
Meinhardt	1/17	1/17	1/18	1/18	10/17	12/1	6/28	EVIR 9/13	De-escal 9/19
Jarrell	2/10	2/11	2/20	6/27	8/11	12/19	12/20	CIS-B 4/4	Detective School 10/20
Throop	1/5	1/5	1/7	1/8	8/11	12/19	12/18	EVIR 9/13	T. Nichols case study 3/16
Saucier	1/28	1/28	6/27	6/27	12/17	12/19	6/30	CIS-B 4/4	De-escal 9/19
Breslin	4/14	4/14	4/16	4/15	12/17	10/10	12/18	CIS-B 5/30	De-escal 9/19
Fields	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	LEEP 3/30	RMS MGT 12/8

MIST = Municipal Police In-Service Training (Annual requirements) **IPMBA** = Police bicyclist certification **CIS-B** = Crisis Intervention Specialist – Basic **JTAC** = Justice Terminal Agency Coordinator **De-escal** = De-escalation class **LEEP** = Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal **EVIR** = Inspection Code Enforcement **EMSVO** = Emergency vehicle operations **RMS MGT** = Management of the records management system **Detective School** = FBI detective training **T. Nichols Case Study** = Case study of the Tyre Nichols incident where a young man was killed by Memphis Police Officers, indicating a need for a change in police philosophy.

Community Policing:

Our Facebook page was shut down twice in 2022. In 2023 we reestablished our page and have been expanding our social media presence. We use the page to educate and entertain the public, and we have used the page to help locate missing people and identify suspicious people and vehicles. We currently have just over 1,700 followers but have reached almost 5,000 people. We also conducted our first ever Citizen's Police Academy. Over two evenings, participants learned the who, what, where, when, why, and how of our department. They were also given the opportunity to wear and use some of our equipment. We will conduct another one in 2024. Also, members of the department have started taking Spanish lessons so that we can better connect with more of our community members.

Donations:

We received many donations of food and water/sports drinks for the staff. Below are members of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Veterans and Military Committee dropping off snacks to the members of the department.



Personnel:

As previously mentioned, Officer Martin DiVergigelis retired after serving 15 years as a part-time officer. Don Rider and Joe Rush, two of our crossing guards, also retired. A vacancy was replaced by Dick Gruss who currently covers two school crossing locations for us.

Bus Patrol

In April of 2023 we partnered with the Souderton Area School District and a company called Bus Patrol which installs cameras on school buses and provides video of drivers who illegally pass school buses when they are stopped, and their red lights are flashing. We had 109 violations reported to us of which we were able to issue 47 civil citations. The remaining were dismissed due to various reasons including the inability to confirm ownership, a lack of evidence, being outside of our jurisdiction, etc. These citations include a fine, but do not affect the status of the

driver's license. The borough receives \$25.00 for each citation issued. To date, no one has contested a Bus Patrol violation.



Even school buses go past school buses.

Child Passenger Seat Installations

This year Chief Newhall became certified as a Child Passenger Seat Technician which allows him to assist the public with the installation and use of child seats for infants up to teenagers. We offer this service by appointment, and there is no charge to the public.

Notable Calls and Events

1. We conducted a month-long search for a missing resident. Unfortunately, when we located her, she was deceased, but we did bring the family some closure. Using social media, we received national and international help with the search.
2. We had an on-site inspection from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. They come to check that we are meeting all the regulations related to dealing with juveniles. Not only did we meet all their standards, with some changes we made to the layout of our building, we exceeded their standards.
3. The department was assigned over 20 reports of possible child abuse in our borough by the Commonwealth and the County. Although most were found to not have occurred, these investigations take considerable time.
4. Almost weekly, we assisted citizens who were the victims of either internet or telephone fraud where they had been coerced into sending large amounts of money to unknown parties. Most of these crimes originate overseas, and there is little we can do to prosecute the offenders. However, we were able to help many in stopping the transfers before they occurred and in educating members of our community about these crimes.
5. After an 11-month investigation, a member of our community was arrested for defrauding family members out of money. Over 105 charges were filed, and this case is currently awaiting a court date.

6. We responded to 140 vehicle crashes this year. Unfortunately, one was fatal and involved a subject riding a bicycle. When it happened, social media exploded with reports of it being a hit and run and a subject fleeing the scene. None of that was true. We were able to stop the spread of misinformation via our social media and our friends in the press and completed a thorough investigation into the crash.
7. Our officers had to use force seven times in 2023 to affect arrests. Two officers were injured. Each incident was documented as required by policy.
8. We issued six solicitor permits in 2023.

Some 2023 Statistics:

Aggravated Assaults:	4	Other Assaults:	10
Thefts:	40	Burglary:	5
Fraud:	46	Criminal Mischief:	20
Sex Offenses:	20	Domestic Disturbances:	114
DUI:	14	Disorderly Conduct:	79
Death Investigations:	7	Animal Complaints:	99
Vehicle Crashes:	140	Traffic Stops:	1,181
Warrants served:	34	Assist Other Agencies:	704
Missing persons:	69		

2023 Goals

Statistics never tell the whole story of an organization. Our priority will always be quality over quantity. We strive to provide the best customer service that we can, and to create and meet goals that will better our department and our citizens. Goals should follow the SMART template of being Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (with a completion date). Police department goals should be decided upon by the police department, our borough management, our elected officials, and our community. Our 2023 goals were:

1. Update the Civil Service Commission rules and regulations. **Achieved.**
2. Reduce the number of open cases. We started 2023 with 60 open cases. We now have 24 open cases. **Achieved.**
3. Upgrade our building and technology. Rooms were improved, new computers were added to the station, and in-car cameras were installed in vehicles. **Achieved.**

4. Create a PLEAC compliant evidence storage area. With some room modifications and repurposing, a secure evidence storage room was established. **Achieved.**
5. Host a Citizen's Police Academy. **Achieved.**
6. Increased interaction with our community. Participating in 36 community events represents the most community policing that we have done in the last three years. **Achieved.**
7. Increase officer training. Every officer went to one, and most went to two additional training classes in 2023. This represents the most time devoted to training over the last three years. **Achieved.**
8. The use of the Montgomery County Correctional Facility as our central processing and booking center. Although we and the Police Chief's Association of Montgomery County have been petitioning the correctional facility monthly to allow us to use them to process and house those we arrest, we are among 11 departments awaiting approval. The Chief's Association has suggested that we may need some help from our elected officials to accomplish this goal. **Not Achieved.**
9. Have 75% of the policies needed for PLEAC accreditation in place. The number of required policies has grown over the year, and despite our best efforts, at the end of the year we had only 70% of the policies in place. **Not Achieved.**
10. Obtain grant funding. We applied for grant funding from both the Commonwealth and the federal government. With the help of a grant writer, we made applications to PCCD, DCED, and the U.S. Department of Justice. Because of our low "violent crime rate", all our grant applications were denied. **Not Achieved.**

Looking Ahead to 2024

We made great progress in 2023. With the assistance of the Borough Manager and Borough Council, rules and ordinances were updated, we began to meet our technology needs, and our personnel have proper rooms to write reports, conduct interviews, and train. As always happens, rules and laws have changed requiring us to designate more resources towards arrests and investigations. We will continue to strive to serve our community the best ways we can, and to work with our partners and stakeholders to create and accomplish goals. We will finish our needed changes to the police station and continue to add the technology we require. We will finish implementing our policies and procedures and they explore accreditation. We will continue to participate in as many community events as we can, and work to build more bridges with our community while removing the walls that separate us. We will continue our training and meet the standards we are required to. We will take every opportunity we can to improve our department and the services we offer.

A Final Thought

As I wrote last year, most people don't truly understand what it means to work in law enforcement. They go by what they see on television or social media. Working in law enforcement is challenging, even in our borough. Our members face the same dangers that officers across the country face. Our officers put in countless hours conducting investigations and following up on calls that the public never sees. We can never be completely prepared for every event we face. In 2023, there were 124 line of duty deaths involving law enforcement officers. The majority of these took place in small towns like ours. It is estimated that about 100 law enforcement officers committed suicide because of working in our field.

We are fortunate that we have such a good community and that most of our residents' care about where they live. We do, however, have criminals and those that pose a threat due to mental or medical illness. My biggest concern in 2023 was staffing. Without enough personnel, it is difficult to adequately protect and serve the public. I am beyond grateful to our elected officials for allowing us to add additional officers in 2024 so that we can best serve our community. I know it was a hard decision to make, but our town will be better off, and I wanted to extend my thanks.

No police department is perfect, but as a group we will do our best to be professional, safe, efficient, effective, and proactive. We will continue to serve to the best of our abilities.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Brian A. Newhall